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Worlds in Dream and Drama:
A Psychoanalytic Theory of Literary Representation

This essay proposes a mode of literary analysis which involves assuming the protagonist to be the dreamer of the work in which he or she appears. The relationship between literature and dream has been hinted at, in various forms, from early times. Artists regularly speak of feeling taken over by and made instrumental to forces external to themselves. That experience of an external force of inspiration has been variously accounted for: the ancients called upon the Muses, or the gods, Milton attributed his sense of possession to God, and the Romantics to a spirit of Nature that plays upon the poet as does the wind on a harp. Novelists often feel that characters develop lives and wills of their own. The source of this sense of an independent life within a work of literature, or of an external force directing an author within and through consciously held purposes has in the course of our culture descended from the heavens, to the romantic intermediate zone, the depths of a collective, or individual psyche. Coleridge, in his concept of a primary imagination that penetrated beyond the depths of an individual psyche to a subterranean stratum of being that binds life together came fairly close in his topography to a Jungian conception of an unconscious. A Freudian viewpoint derives that feeling of inspiration from an unconscious which, though general in its components, is personal in the dynamic organization of those components. This unconscious, comparable to a part of the body that is numb but vulnerable to injury, stores emotions that derive from past experiences and condition our reactions toward and the ways we go about shaping our present experience.

Though Plato suspected that divine inspiration was akin to madness, and therefore wanted artists honourably escorted to the city gates, as long as the muses or gods or God inspired the artist, the artist

was thereby given authority and the importance of art for human culture confirmed. When the scope of inspiration descended, along with the gods, to trans-personal depths of the human psyche, as it does for Coleridge, and in a different way for Jung, the artist remained secure, for if he no longer told us truths of the heavens, he told instead the deepest truths of our own nature, as uncontaminated by the artist's particularity as before. But Freud, in eliminating a cosmology from his psychology, implicitly challenged the status of art and the artist when he defined art in analogy to dreams as the imaginary gratification of unconscious wishes, deriving, along with the ravings of mad-men and lovers, not from an exalted source either heavenly or mysteriously subterranean, but from infantile longings demeaning to the dignity of any reading and writing adult. The implication of Freud's conception is akin to Plato's, for it logically implies that art, along with spiritual or religious experience, is a means to evade or soften "an honourable struggle with fate." The denigration implied by the link between dream and art has ever since haunted literary criticism based on the psycho-analytic model. Though use of the Freudian model to analyze literary characters has raised questions that sharpened perceptions of the text and provided new ranges of significance, even the most subtle of such perceptions carried the uneasy sense that something wrong, reductive, was being done to the literary work, that account was not being taken of its mimetic, moral or formal values. When Freudian criticism used literary works to construct psycho-biographical accounts of authors, this new context of signification also led to new questions that sharpened perceptions of patterns and detail and, for some, heightened the sense of meaningfulness. But this strategy could not provide a rationale for throwing the weight of inquiry onto an author's psyche, which could be of interest only because of the work it produced, nor, having linked the work to the particularity of the author, could it dispel the implied diminishing analogy between a symptom and a literary work. Though both forms of psychoanalytic criticism created a deep sense of complexity and asked new questions that created new frames of reference for the generation of significance, by de-emphasizing intentional and formal aspects they turned literature into a kind of veil to be penetrated, analogous to the manifest content of a dream, the latent content of which was to be sought elsewhere. They located meaning in the hidden, unconscious drives, which remained beyond the flux of time and history that were seen only on the disparaged manifest level.

Norman Holland attempted a more inclusive mode of Freudian criticism in the *Dynamics of Literary Response,*[1] for in conceiving of meaning, form and structure as strategies which both express and conceal the core phantasy, he included more literary components

within the psychoanalytical critical orbit. Though Holland did not necessarily demean literature by regarding its cognitive and formal aspects as defense, or by referring to infantile phantasy as constituting its core, the language tended in that direction. Frederick Crews in response proposed a model of biographic criticism which, by linking an author's personal and social conflicts to the cognitive and formal aspects of the literary work, both avoided reductionism and maintained the significance of authorial intention that Holland had avoided in the term "core fantasy."[2] But the question of wherein the phantasy resided, in the author, work or reader, remained, and Holland building on the work of Simon Lesser, but lacking the humanistic consensus that Lesser relied upon unawares, turned his attention to studies of responses to reflecting texts.[3] Holland's study of identity themes in literary responses both de-emphasizes the study of literature in favour of responses to it and raises a conceptual difficulty. For one's reading of a response to literature must be as subject to one's own style of responding as is one's reading of literature, and so the theory implies an infinite regress. Though some enhanced appreciation both of the complexity of literature and of the value of others' mode of reading ensue from Holland's practice, if one consistently avoids judgement of the responses, based on correctness, inclusiveness or complexity, then the project logically becomes one of mutual self-exploration. And if a standard of judgement is invoked, then the work, and all the theoretical problems of criticism, remain in place.

Holland's work on subjectivist criticism coalesced with the impact of structuralism and post-structuralist thought on literary theory. Within that world view intentions and purposes along with the clear distinction Freud wanted to maintain between rational and "primary process" or wish-fulfilling thought, are illusions generated by and perpetuating arbitrarily linked signifiers and signified, and are forever disintegrating through the gap into the pestilential vapours of absence. Literature that arises from and supports the illusion of the subject, once valued for its mimesis and moral vision of real worlds, now is valued as illustrative of the ways in which the discourse systems that constitute what the nineteenth century called reality throw up illusions of purposive characters in action. Such a vision leaves, for the Freudian critic, neither characters nor authors to analyze, for they, along with distinctions of genre, or between fiction and other forms of narrative, have dissolved into intertexuality and linguistic systems.

The literary criticism generated by this intellectual movement derives from Lacan's version of psychoanalysis. His conceptual system, by reversing Freud's conception of the relation between the individual and the world, brought into psychoanalytical thought

awareness of social and cultural forces, the neglect of which had been problematic for Freudian literary criticism. Whereas Freud sees us deviously seeking to satisfy innate drives in a repressive environment, Lacan sees those drives themselves created and shaped through that cultural nexus. The unobtainable immediate realm or register of the Real by definition forever eludes articulation, but creates at a remove the Imaginary and Symbolic orders which it permeates and by which it is in turn shaped. Our drives then, in any form they are knowable, and the social forms that produce them, become symbols, or signifiers of each other, rather than being symbolized in those social forms. The ego becomes a social, that is, a linguistic creation, or an illusion of unity forged (from an illusive Real) by the fluid social and cultural nexus constituted in language.

Lacan's conception of the creation of the self within this flux creates a continuum rather than an opposition between conscious and unconscious levels of the mind, for the unconscious, "structured like a language," is constituted within signifiers that have been "barred," or excised from knowledge, but like the conscious is composed of the ideas, values, and conceptions of which the social framework is composed. The conscious sense of self and the unconscious are equally constructs, access to the latter revealing the architecture of the former. Dreams, for Lacan, do not so much fulfill a wish as to speak it, revealing the structure of desire, but within his system it is difficult to say who is dreaming. since the self is constituted within the symbolic order, and dreams would presumably express a level of being that is prior to the formation of a self.

By using literature as illustrative of his theories, Lacan implies a mimetic conception, wherein literature represents the process by which the self tries to complete itself within and through the images of others that it generates. In the process he brings into play some aspects of the structural disposition of characters, relates the givens of the work to the central enterprise, and makes subtle uses of figurative language. In attempting to discern the gaps between the level of discontinuous images (roughly, the Imaginary) and the mimetic content (roughly, the Symbolic), the Lacanian approach softens the distinction between the manifest and latent content of literature by shifting the weight of emphasis from analysis of a figure to analysis of a text which is implicitly treated as mimetic of the ways in which consciousness and ego identity both constitute and are produced by the discourse that is the world.[4] This strategy avoids the reductionism implicit in a Freudian conception of literature as dream structures, the egocentricity of which has been disguised by elaboration in conformity

to rational, aesthetic and social norms, but does so by devaluing those norms at all levels.

If Lacan absorbs what we normally call the rational into the irrational unconscious, the opposite route has been taken by Anglo-American work on dreams, primary process thought, and the relation of both to literature. Anton Ehrenzweig draws on the work of Object relation theorists, to describe the creative process as a means by which higher and more complex conscious syntheses are made of emotional levels that threaten established structures of consciousness into new and richer cognitive structures. Art, therefore, by encouraging a fusion with the aesthetic object, allows the audience to enrich and revivify the adult and differentiated self with the emotional gain of that fusion.[5] Arthur F. Marotti extends Ehrenzweig's conception, based principally on visual art and music, toward literature, arguing the formal properties of art derive from the ways in which external and cultural reality is shaped by the artist's "personal identity and private vision."[6]

The conception of the unconscious as consisting of different layers of cognitive and emotional structures, rather than as an undifferentiated chaos underlying the structures of society informs recent work on dreams, which attempt integrations of Freudian dream theory with that generated by cognitive psychology and by sleep research.[7] These studies soften Freud's radical separation of latent from manifest content by looking at dream structures as manifestations of the ways in which the dreamer structures his or her waking experience. They de-emphasize Freud's conception of dreams as compromise fulfillments of infantile wishes in favor of an integrative model in which dreams are seen to reconcile present or ongoing experience or challenges to previous perceptual and emotional patterns of response. This concept of dreaming, in emphasizing the manifest content of dreams, also places conscious or present and unconscious, or past, experience, on a continuum rather than in opposition to each other.[8] This conception, which tends to omit discussion of affect in favor of structures, and Freud's are not mutually exclusive. Joseph Sitterson draws on George Klein's argument that infantile pleasure in order and form informs dreams, phantasy and art to argue that "As long as 'wish' is not defined reductively, then 'wish-satisfying' and 'meaning-generating' are not mutually exclusive."[9] When they are conflated, one can think of dreaming as a process by which we forge the story, or narrative, of ourselves, making new and present challenges consistent with our sense of identity and our modes of pleasure, structured from the past, so that we can continue to wrest from the sometimes recalcitrant and unlikely experiences of our lives gratifications of sometimes unlikely kinds.

All these approaches enrich the comparison of art to dream, but they do not, with the exception of Ehrenzweig's work on visual art and music, provide a systematic way of analyzing the way the interrelations they suggest appear in a given work of art that does not look elsewhere for clues to what is hidden within it, nor do they answer the old objection, repeated by Sitterson that art cannot be compared to dreams because dreams are interpreted through the associations of the dreamer, while literature cannot be so interpreted. There are, however, some approaches to dreams, deriving from non-Freudian conceptual systems, that attempt to systematize the manifest content of dreams, notably Calvin Hall and Robert L. Van de Castles, *Content Analysis of Dreams,* and David Foulkes, *The Grammar of Dreams.*[10] While their discussion of dreams offers ways to think systematically about formal patterns, it, like the discussions of primary process thinking, tends to bypass dramatic and emotional elements as well as their representational quality.

An approach to dreams that is systematically inclusive of the drama and intensity of dreams is to be found in the work of Rolf Loehrich.[11] His system of analyzing, as distinct from interpreting, dreams relies on the associations made within a dream or sequences of dreams. But unlike Hall or Foulkes, he focuses on the role of the dreamer in relation to the configuration of the dream, taking into account such phenomena as the amount of control exercised by the dreamer, the degree of intensity of dream events, the different levels of awareness, the dynamics of changing configurations in the chronology of the dream, and, by noting time markers within a dream, and different life stages. He also brings to dream analysis some commonsense relationships to waking life; for example, a dream in which one flies might be significant of several different emotional levels, but one thing that it signifies is an unrealistic sense of one's own abilities. Though his understanding of dreams is embedded in a far-reaching theory of needs that includes a study of psycho-somatic illness, and occult symbolism, his method of analyzing the interrelations amongst dream figures, as well as interpreting the meaning of individual components from internal rather than external associations suggests an application to literature that is at once precise, and comprehends both structural and dynamic aspects of literature. It allows one to make precise use of Breger's conception of the integrative function of dreams in connection with the wider range of representative material of realistic literature.

The advantages of his system of dream analysis can be brought to bear on literature by thinking, as I have suggested, of the relations in literature in analogy to the relations between the figure that appears in

our dreams to whom we refer as "I," and the events that comprise that figure's experience within the dream, or, as I said, as the dream of its protagonist.

Before I discuss the systematic ways in which this conception, or thought strategy can be used, I will give some rationale for it through a discussion of the process of artistic creation and of the role of the imagination.

An author may begin a work of fiction because an incident has occurred that attracted his interest, because he wishes to convey a philosophical, political or moral idea, because he wishes to explore a character, or because he wants to ring changes on the literary conventions he has inherited. No matter which of those is primary in his consciousness, he will already have made a selection from a field of possible incidents, characters, ideas or conventions and literary forms. In that selection he will have expressed both his conscious intention, and the context of experience in which that intention has significance. In executing his intention, he will make further selections from different possible ways of doing so, a process of selection that will continue from the largest structures that comprise the work to the smallest detail of language, though probably as the detail grows finer the process of selection will be guided by a feeling of what works, or is appropriate, or by a sense that the work generates its own inner dynamics. He will interpret that feeling according to the ideas and concepts his world makes available to him—as inspiration of the gods, muses or of God, as the impersonal operation of archetypal forces, as moral and political imperatives, or as unconscious forces. A work of art, unlike life, contains no givens; since all components are chosen all components are meaningful, whether or not an author is aware of the principle of selection that occurred. In this respect a work of art is similar to a dream that has been touched off by an event of the previous day. The "day's residue" does not account for the dream because the person dreaming experienced a host of events out of which his sleeping self selected that one only. Therefore one expects the remainder of the dream, together with associations later brought to it, to reveal the ways in which past experience gave significance to the event that occurred in the present, and therefore to explain why that event, rather than some other, initiated the dream. Similarly, one looks to the detail of the work to surround with significance the initiating ideas or intentions. The difference is that in art the initiating idea or event is most often conscious, and consciously integrated into the author's world view and value system, though the contents of his consciousness, like his language, will reflect the world in which his being is embedded. That means that the process of selectivity that guides the finer detail will

reveal the unconscious ranges of significance attached to that much wider range of issues of more general and less exclusively personal initiating material than is the case in a dream.[12]

That argument justifies the not unfamiliar analogy between the work of art and a dream, but does not give the rationale for thinking of the protagonist as dreamer. However, most people when they dream dream themselves. That is, when we awaken we refer to a figure in the dream as "I," even if the self we dreamt was of different age, appearance or even sex than we are in life, and certainly that dream "I," whom I will call the dreamer, often behaves in ways which we do not regard as characteristic of ourselves. The dream, then, can be thought of as the story of what the dreamer does, or what happens to him, and the stance, active, passive, observer or participant, in which a dreaming person experiences himself will be significant in view of what it is that occurs to him, defined as external, in that stance. It may also reveal something characteristic of the dreaming person, but an author's conscious artistry widens the intervening gap. The author who constructs a work of fiction generally chooses, even if his immediate concern is with event rather than character, persons to whom those events occur or who bring them about. If those characters are to generate an illusion of reality, depth and multi-facedness such as we associate with real people, their creation will entail a host of detail and nuance beyond what could be stated as conscious intention. It is my contention that in the process of that creation, the author generates a version of himself, analogous to our dream selves within our dreams, and so intensely fashions that figure that it becomes the center, or vehicle of all the concerns, conscious and unconscious, that were involved in the artistic project. The work then becomes organized around the experience of that figure into whom the author's imagination has entered. The author's conscious concerns become the consciousness of that figure, while the unconscious concerns are externalized from him to become the event, setting and character that he confronts. The action then is designed to unfold a consciousness experiencing and integrating, or failing to integrate, a nexus of event, values and ideas from which it has itself emerged. In this way an art work expresses its author, his social and historical determinants as well as the unknown quantity that constitutes his humanity within those determinants. But it does so through a depersonalized or fictive voice.[13] That fictive voice, the "I" or speaking voice of a poem, is a fictive person, whether or not the author intended it to be so, for he has created a persona whether or not it is one he also espouses. In narrative fiction the primary voice might be the narrator, or that of a character, but in drama, to which this discussion will be limited,[14] that voice is

embodied in a character. The protagonist becomes the figure who carries the depersonalized voice of the author, and the work that renders him bears the same relation to him as do the figures and setting of our dreams to the figures whom we identify as ourselves in those dreams. This relationship lends to the mimetic, intellectual and formal components the intensity, organization and force that derives from a dream-like unfolding of the protagonist's central project or conflict. The author's conscious intentions, both moral and aesthetic, in the alchemical cauldron of the imagination become the protagonist's "secondary elaboration." They constitute a kind of association, analogous to one a person might make between a bizarre dream component and a real remembered event. Therefore the conceptual, mimetic and formal aspects of literature can be regarded as on a continuum with, rather than as a disguise for, the conditioning drives and desires, and the movement of the protagonist's consciousness along that continuum becomes, in this mode of reading, the focus of critical interest.

The relationship, then, between the protagonist and his world becomes, as I said, analogous to the relationship between the figure we identify as ourselves in any particular dream and the other components of the dream represent the strategy by which we, at any given moment, construct our ongoing narrative of ourselves by symbolizing the material from our daily life in the modes by which our drives, desires, and self conceptions have been constituted.[15] In looking at one's own dream in this way, one would comment on the stance taken toward the figures with whom the protagonist is in confrontation—active, or passive, manipulative or combative, as well as the kinds of figures (from past or present, male or female, parental or contemporary) with which, since it is our dream, we have surrounded ourselves. Though without associations from a dreaming person one would not know how a particular dream related to events, present or past, that were not figured within it, one would know something of that person's image of himself in the world, as well as something of the ways in which components within the dream are associated with each other by the dreamer. The work of literature, which incorporates the fruits of the author's consciousness, vastly enlarges and renders more complex and multi-layered that network of associations, giving much greater significance to the ways in which the protagonist comports himself toward the configurations he is also seen to generate. Therefore, as I suggested earlier, though this theory rests on a Freudian model, it purports to analyze neither author, nor character, nor audience response, but rather the ways in which the configurations of characters, the structure of action, the language, conceptualization, genre and tone relate to each other as aspects of the protagonist's strategies to forge out of the

different levels of reality with which he finds himself confronted a narrative of himself that will wrest from the world he has generated some manner of fulfilled desire.

An advantage of this approach is that, while the theory rests on a Freudian conception of consciousness as shaped by dynamic unconscious forces, and raises questions from Freudian expectations, the application of it does not rely on specific theoretical constructs outside of the work. For example, while images of daggers might in general be thought of as representing phallic desires, they would not be so considered in the absence of imagery that conjoined them to eroticism, and in its presence would signify the union of erotic and aggressive drives. The importance of such a union would depend on its play in the work as a whole. Macbeth's approach to Duncan with a dagger tells us only that he has interpreted figures in the paternal realm as impediments to his desire, which he has defined as criminal. But he blends the aggressive with the erotic when he compares himself to Tarquin stealing through the dark to rape Lucrece. That link in turn can receive its significance only from other associations in the play, though it readies us to look for further understanding, from associations, of the link made between paternal and female figures. What can be said then is limited by the network of associations within the work, while associations brought by the reader from either theory or from personal inclination are irrelevant.[16] One avoids the tendency to wrest detail out of its context into seemingly arbitrary theoretical frameworks, and the tendency to reduce dynamic experience to static conceptual statement. It provides some rules for analyzing literature without dispersing the humane content of literary discourse; it weds a systematized understanding to a nuanced apprehension of action and language.

In this way considering the protagonist as dreamer begins to soften the polarity between deconstructivist and humanist criticism. It further softens that polarity by differently framing the question of a work's meaning. For, while dissolving figures, plots and ideas into networks of association and systematic polarities, it also conceives those networks and polarities as constituting an image of consciousness experiencing its own structures of meaning. The protagonist's emotional conflict then expresses the polarities of the work in which he exists in the same way our conflicts remain ours even if we understand them and ourselves as expressing the social nexus in which we have our being. All aspects of the protagonist's world—other characters, events, genre, tone, and structural principals, mimetic fidelity or overtly dream-like occurrences, moral or philosophical abstractions, dramatic pacing and tone, express his drives and desires, his strategies confronting or evading them, or his attitudes toward them. The work's

meaning becomes the meaning for the protagonist of these various components, which is determined by the ways they are associated with each other, for that network of associations becomes analogous to the associations, whether identified as memory or phantasy, that a person dreaming might make to his own remembered dream. The work of literature becomes a dream that contains within itself its own associations, collapsing the distinction between manifest and latent content. In this way one preserves and accounts for a sense of intentionality pervading art, imbuing it with coherence, and does justice to its multi-layered meaningfulness, while remaining silent on the question of authorial intention, for these intentions, even if known with reasonable certainty, are seen as aspects of the protagonist's strategies to create meaning. Questions about a work's meaning are translated into questions of the protagonist's mode of creating meaning, and the work becomes a mimesis of the ways in which human beings signify their experience.

To sum up, his strategy brings all the "givens" of a work, either its conventions or its basic circumstances, into the realm of signification. What the protagonist says, does and sees constitute his consciousness; all that happens to him, or that without his knowledge affects him, all that he, knowingly or unknowingly, confronts as external to him, constitutes expressions of his unconscious. The plot, or structure of action renders his negotiation between the demands of his unconscious drives and those he espouses, while the language, out of which all is composed, renders the ebb and flow of emotion, and the genre, whether comic, tragic, romance or satire, expresses his stance toward himself. The entire work becomes a moving image of the protagonist's approaches to and retreats from his desires and fears, the meaning of which resides in the relationship between the way a character experiences his conflict, and the way that conflict is expressed in what appears to him as his world.

Before expanding on some of the implications of this mode of interpretation, I will exemplify it with a brief reading of a familiar work—*Hamlet*—in order to avoid too abstract a presentation. In the initial configuration Hamlet defines himself as on the verge of abandoning filial status for the role of husband and king, in the framework of the play as well as in the cosmology of the time, an amplified paternal image. He expresses his uneasy desire for that new status by providing himself with a murdered father, an image that also expresses his ambivalence toward the paternal realm. His unease with assuming the maturity that now lies open to him partially resurrects the father, as a ghost, and creates Claudius as an object of justified hatred which both preserves an image of a good father, and serves as a barrier to

women and to the throne. Two reasons appear in the language and action that account for his fear, both of them remote from his consciousness. One is that he compares his thoughtfulness negatively to his father's military prowess, which he both admires and despises (that appears in his ambivalent ruminations on Fortinbras, a figure associated to King Hamlet through attributes and to Hamlet himself through parallel circumstances. The combination makes Fortinbras the son his father should have had, as King Henry thinks Hotspur a more appropriate son than Prince Hal). For Hamlet, then, maturity means espousing martial values in the face of death, as opposed to reflective values, those of a student, he has espoused. Hamlet also associates death, along with disease, pollution and corruption, with women, so that the alternative of denying the project and returning to Wittenberg, would also preclude sexuality. The two projects, becoming husband and king are for Hamlet inextricably joined, and both are joined to images of death. Therefore, having opened the path to women and the throne, he barricades it by raising the image of the father in a triply split form—the idealized father appears as the ghost, the foully sexual father as Claudius (a diplomat rather than a warrior, more like Hamlet himself) and as a fool in Polonius (one can almost see King Hamlet transfigured into Polonius when the ghost seems as busy with his underground eavesdropping as Polonius will later be busy with spying). Polonius' paternal function is most remote from Hamlet's consciousness, since he is cast as Ophelia's rather than his own father, but Polonius is the most immediate object of Hamlet's animosity. He, like Claudius, functions to separate Hamlet from women, Claudius from Gertrude, and Polonius from Ophelia, the two women being firmly associated with each other in the imagery of weeds and disease, as well as in their weakness and betrayal.

All those barriers, however, are not sufficient to contain Hamlet's repudiated desire; he will not leave Gertrude to heaven, but rather battles his way to her bedroom through the slew of fathers he has generated. Polonius calls him there, he tells Claudius who prays at the portals to go to Hell, and the busy intruding ghost almost succeeds in interrupting his delightfully loathing evocation of the "enseaméd sheets." He eliminates two paternal forms in the process, but not Claudius who, since his figure alone carries sexuality, however foully surrounded by pestilent vapours, Hamlet is most, rather than least, reluctant to kill. Hamlet, though remotely and episodically, accomplishes the oedipal project. He disposes of all three versions of the father, he evokes full images of Gertrude's sexuality and drives a wedge between her and Claudius, and having enacted versions of the oedipal claim, he leaves the parental realm and claims Ophelia, though very

remotely, since the episode appears only in the ambiguous context of Ophelia's madness. As his approach to Gertrude joins punitive aggression to eroticism, so does his deflowering of Ophelia as suggested in her songs. His compromise between desire, and fear of the hatred, violence and corruption he has associated with desire, is to claim love and power, "naked" as Hamlet the Dane, on the brink of Ophelia's grave and enroute to his own. Finally, he simultaneously revenges himself on the idealized father, before whom he feels inadequate, and assumes his father's mantle, by giving the whole of Denmark, a piece of which his father's martial prowess had won, to the son of his father's enemy, and by arranging a military funeral for himself—as nice a piece of over-determination as one could desire.

Cutting so swift a swath through *Hamlet* clearly leaves many jagged ends but it focusses some of the principles involved in this approach. First, it alters the kinds of questions one asks. For example, the question of whether Hamlet was mad disappears into an analysis of the split between his conscious definition of his behaviour as feigned madness and distanced visions of what he regards as genuine madness, and of what actions he interprets as threats to what he regards as sanity. The question of Hamlet's cowardice becomes one of how he has placed himself in relation to the values in terms of which he thinks himself a coward, a conscious aspect of his unconscious struggle toward and away from the death he will finally espouse, and the question of his relation to Ophelia merges with an analysis of his painful approach to the heterosexuality he has defined through her (with her death into the madness he only feigned, he, except for the frantic flurry at her grave, is becalmed until he joins her in death). The question of why he didn't kill Claudius at prayer takes second place to the significance of his having placed Claudius on the path to Gertrude. In general, when a text throws up a question or puzzle, there is more significance to be found in the protagonist's retreat from the issues that compose it than in an attempt to resolve it. One steps back from the question in order to see it as an image.

As said before, this approach throws into primary significance the principle of selection since it assumes that the artist's unconscious was involved in the particular choices made from the ways his historical moment made available by which he might have executed his conscious intention. His sense of what is appropriate or will "work" to convey his artistic, moral or political intentions will be infused with and shaped by the network of drives, desires, and fears that are associated with or symbolized within those conscious purposes. Shakespeare may have been concerned with the moral problems of revenge, with the intellectual problems deriving from a feudal concept of

honour in an increasingly centralized power structure and with the significance of life and death in the face of a world of shifting values. But those issues, out of which is created the figure of Hamlet, become for Hamlet links in the chain of associations stretched between his conscious and his unconscious dilemma. That dilemma represents an internalized form of the problem of authority and the attitudes toward sexuality within which Shakespeare was himself created. We are brought, then, to the joining edge of the sociological and the psychological, to an apprehension of some particular ways in which, as Tolstoy says, fish are in seas and seas in fish.

As is by this time clear, the principle of association forms a chain of signifiers-signifieds that binds action, character, thought and language into an hermeneutic circle that constitutes the protagonist's world. The work is "self-referential" in that each aspect of it refers to all others, and in that assertions about art found within art, such as those Hamlet makes, form part of the signifying chain, but that very self-referentiality becomes a mimesis of our own reflexive character.[17] But unlike other modes of semiology, this mode creates a topography of signification, for the relation of the protagonist's consciousness to the significations established through following that chain forms the largest part of the drama that we follow. Whether or not a relationship is oedipal, for example, is less significant than the protagonist's movements between familial figures among whom sexuality is by definition guilty, and non-familial figures with whom it is permitted. Within this context it is mistaken to speak of Hamlet as having an oedipus complex, rather we see him as moving toward and away from confrontations with the figures and emotions that would comprise an Oedipus complex, and experiencing those components at different levels. Hamlet, having approached the sexually permitted, present - and future-oriented relationship with Ophelia, evades it by regressing into a parental drama. In the process he reveals the associations of sexuality with decay, betrayal and death that necessitate his flight. Though that parental drama is defined among present figures, such figures more readily suggest past forms than do others, but a character can be said to have a past only in so far as the text provides images of pastness. Such images accumulate as Hamlet defines his father's murder as past, suggest a deeper past that joins with the overarching revenge motif when Horatio imagines the Roman dead arising from their graves (an image that associates the past with public rather than private horror and disruption). That image attaches to women and becomes action when Yorik's skull emerges from the grave into which Ophelia will descend. That sense of pastness becomes personally immediate when Hamlet associates the skull with his own birth and boyhood, and directs it to "my lady's

chamber." That chamber is the grave, the only place in which Hamlet can permit himself to imagine his love for Ophelia fulfilled.

Lear approaches the infantile in envisioning himself within Cordelia's "kind nursery." He attempts retreat from it only to find himself enmeshed in a nightmare of foully sexual and cruel parent figures until he sends his imagination through the stench of women's genitals to see himself come wawling and crying, into the smelly air. In encountering his own image of sexuality he finds the "ounce of civit" that will sufficiently sweeten his imagination to permit Cordelia to emerge, for a moment, from image into presence. But he does not sweeten it enough to resolve the polarity between compassion, legitimacy and relative sexlessness on the one hand, and ruthless cruelty, illegitimate individualist striving and foul sexuality on the other, between which all levels of the play stretch, so that he too can claim his beloved only in the grave.

The main features of the inner landscape I have been describing are, in most works, other characters, whom this approach may seem to dissolve altogether into the network of images from which they arise. To resolve this difficulty I will pause to consider the relation, in dream, between the dreamer and other figures. Those figures fall into three categories. Our dreams can include figures resembling people whom we know, either in the present or in the past, and we can, in our dreams, intermingle them. However realistic a dream figure might be, that figure is not the person, but rather a representation of our associations to and relations with that person, of the way he or she functions for us (though the representation may or may not correspond to the waking reality). Some figures are realistic, but are not recognizable. Those are most often thought of as composite figures, representing a blend of attributes belonging to several persons who entered our lives at different times. They would suggest a dreaming person whose emotions are less integrated to the reality of present life. This category enters naturalistic literature through the convention of disguise, which provides a probable way in which one figure can transform into another. If Edgar is seen as dreamer[18] then his disguise, because his personality changes with the disguises he assumes with an exuberance that goes beyond circumstantial need, makes particularly visible a sharply divided conscious sense of himself, though he espouses the somewhat sadistically moral Edgar rather than the devil-ridden Poor Tom. For Gloucester, his son's shifting appearances show Gloucester's psyche infusing the present figure with images deriving from other emotional dimensions, and for Lear past emotional forms have totally obliterated Edgar's present form from consciousness. Orlando's encounter with the male and female forms of Rosalind express his confusion about his sexual

choice, a confusion that never becomes conscious because he, presumably, never knows of the identity of Ganymede and Rosalind.

Finally there are phantastic figures who suggest emotions more immediately leading to past emotional levels that are not integrated into the present, corresponding to figures such as Hamlet's ghost or Macbeth's witches. Though folklore was probably enough to accommodate these figures within a primarily naturalistic convention, in general that convention demands that such figures be imbedded in some kind of probabilistic circumstance. Edgar's disguise provides the needed circumstance to allow the grotesque devils to enter the play, primarily as images, though the horned and thousand-eyed devil almost emerges from Edgar's language to become a figure for Gloucester. These grotesqueries, when they coalesce from images into independent figures suggest dreamers whose ordinary sense of themselves is submerged by a sudden eruption of glaringly antithetic desires. In tragedy they suggest dreamers attempting to integrate emotional forms from the past into an emotionally depleted present, and either partially succeeding in ways that are too little, too late and too disparate from ordinary creature pleasure, or yielding to their force, as Antony does when his sense of himself dissolves into the aura of magic with which he has surrounded both Cleopatra and Octavius. Comic, or happy endings entail a vision of such integration or reclamation, but not its accomplishment, for the phantasy remains within the improbable means by which they are usually achieved, suggesting that the redeeming vision cannot be integrated into ordinary causality, and the lower, or distanced, affect suggests a more hesitant approach to frightening emotion. Leontes' dream attempt to account probabilistically for Hermione's miraculous resurrection shows a straining struggle to bridge the gap.

So far I have discussed how the presence or absence of naturalistically represented figures and events constitutes the topography of the dreamer's landscape. But the more naturalistic are the other figures, the more clamorous two questions become. The first is who shall be regarded as the protagonist, and the second is of how to account for fully characterized secondary figures.

The answer to the first question is that *any* figure may be regarded as the protagonist. One might take Claudius as protagonist of *Hamlet*, but to do so makes the configurations more remote. Hamlet then becomes a distanced representation of Claudius' incomplete filial drama, through whom he expresses his fearful desire to be punished for the ambition he has without fully knowing it, defined as evil, and his drama becomes more like that in *Macbeth*. The play would then be analogous to a dream in which the "I" is more spectator than partici-

pant, suggesting a dreaming person who experiences his own emotions through others' dramas, emptying himself of emotion too difficult to experience directly. Such a strategy allows us to see Claudius as the emotional alternative Hamlet rejects in favour of the love-death romance and high-lights the polarity, fundamental to the play, between bloodless, efficient Machiavellianism and passionate life, a polarity the resolution of which Hamlet envisions in his praise of Horatio for "co-meddling blood and judgement." But it makes better sense to join rather than resist the affective force of the play by choosing the figure whose experience is most immediate and most strongly organizing. In works such as *Antony and Cleopatra*, where the stories of two figures seem almost equally compelling, in order to see the depth at which each functions for the other one should pursue both. For example, Cleopatra's image of herself as a decaying womb in the mud of Nilus' banks betrays her self-hatred, which then throws light on why Antony interprets Cleopatra as "poisoning" his enterprise. Finally, I believe, greater immediacy accrues from taking Antony as the protagonist, and subsuming Cleopatra's portrait to his, despite his earlier dream death, and that generally one figure will function most strongly to organize the configurations of a work.

Comedies make this issue more problematic, for often the most potent organizing principle does not seem to rest with the most prominent characters, but rather with one who is pervasively in the background. For example, *As You Like It* falls best into place if one takes Duke Senior, the magical centre of the forest, as dreamer, *Twelfth Night* organizes itself nicely around Malvolio, and *Midsummer Night's Dream* around Oberon. These plays then become analogous to dreams in which one experiences oneself primarily as observing consciousness.[19]

This strategy may seem arbitrary until we consider the second question, how to account for the full development of characters encountered by the dreamer. To do so I must return to the relation of dreaming to waking life. Though we regard our emotional lives as internal to us, and though as adults not all of our emotional capacities will be called into play by people with whom we have surrounded ourselves (and in whose dramas we unwillingly recognize our own supporting roles), all of those capacities were at one time shaped and made known to us in connection to other people. Therefore, while other figures in our dreams represent configurations of our own feelings, our dream relation to them represents the ways our feelings are known to us in relation to other people.[20] If one dreams oneself rejected by a lover, the dream rejection expresses a preference for the stance of the rejected rather than rejecting one, as well as covert

rejection of the lover, even if the waking counterpart of the dream lover is rejecting. In interpreting such a dream it would matter whether there were a waking counterpart to the dream configuration. If so, then the dream might lead to some understanding of the way in which infantile patterns and associations were effecting the dreaming person's choice of partners. If not, then the dream might lead to an understanding of emotional dimensions involved but not overt in waking life. In each case, the reality of the other person would be part of the signifying frame of the dream. But in literature the waking counterparts of the other characters fall into the same empty space as the non-existent dreaming person. Reading in this way involves the assumption that the dreamer includes in his dream representations figures who would play similar roles in the life of a dreaming person more or less like the dreamer. And since, if when I awaken I say that I have been dreaming of my daughter, that statement constitutes an association (though a very immediate one) to the figure in my dream, we once again return to the principle that a work of art is like a dream that contains within itself its own associations.

Another aspect of dream topography focusses around narrative sequence which, in turn, involves causality. Since events are here conceived as moving images in the process of completing themselves, an order of narration that violates chronology establishes a second-level story of the process by which a consciousness encounters its own ground. In *Hamlet* the ghost appears to the watch presumably at the same time as Hamlet hears Claudius' throne speech. But the sequence shows us the process by which Hamlet first remotely evokes the ghost, and then allows it to encroach on his consciousness first as a tale, and then as a confrontation. Lear intersperses his approach to an idealized and desexualized image of Cordelia with distanced evocations of Goneril and Regan's sexual struggle for Edmund, the sequence expressing the flickering duality of his concerns, so that the formal structuring becomes an aspect of the protagonist's enterprise.

Since time becomes an image, so does causality, the sense of which is generated by chronological sequence. When time and causality are seen as images, they then collapse into space, that is, the image completes itself only at the end of the work, and that end is then contained in the beginning, or consequence is contained in its cause, transforming a temporal, or diachronic, experience into a spatial, or synchronic entity. If in a dream, having entered a house in search of cake, one encounters a devouring monster, in dream logic one has entered the house in order to confront the monster. The feeling represented by wanting cake presupposed the fearful desire to be devoured, indicating that the comfort of houses and cake signifies for the dreamer devour-

ing monsters. That dream, without associations from the dreamer, or from a sequence of dreams, would not provide information about the particular emotional dynamics that might have generated fearful monsters. Since a literary work partakes of both waking and dreaming realms, its mimetic component provides what would be brought by a dreamer's associations to his life circumstances, filling out the picture of a life unfolding. In analogy, Hamlet's resolution of his conflicting drives in death is not the consequence but the cause of the action that eventuates in it. This inverse relationship of consequence to cause generates the literary penumbra of aesthetic inevitability and of unity, for the end reveals what the beginning implied, creating a sense of a directed project, of a teleological vision of life, that contains its own meaningfulness.

Finally, this central difference between dream and literature leads to another dimension of similarity. Neither another person, nor we ourselves can know what has been omitted, forgotten or distorted in the retelling or remembering of a dream. Analysts rely on the assumption that the process of association outside of the dream will compensate for lies or omission in the dream report, and that even a direct lie, itself a kind of an association, will in an indirect process lead into the emotions central to the dream. They thread through a network of language clues, some of them thought of as dream language, and some not. The only dreams of which we have immediate experience are our own, and then only while dreaming, a remembered dream being only as reliable as any other memory. Therefore insofar as literature partakes of dream forms, we, while being audience to it, relate to it as we do to our own dreams while dreaming. Nothing can be omitted or misremembered because all is presently occurring. Insofar as we, while reading or watching a play, disengage our intellectual capacities, we become like ourselves in those dreams in which we are aware of ourselves dreaming, or like our waking selves when we observe the behavior in which we are presently engaged. Literature then provides us with an unusual combination of an experience at once unmediated and highly artificed.

The function of that unique phenomenon raises issues that go beyond the scope of this essay. However, the approach taken here suggests an evaluative principle, for the more fully a work contains the materials that extend the significance and range of powerful passions toward large scale historical and cultural issues, the richer the language in images that allow us to extend the associative resonance of plot, character and concept, the more fully it reveals ways in which deeply personal struggles relate to historical and cultural struggles, the more fully does it become a mimesis of the overdetermined complexity

of our lives, of "knot intrinsicate of life." It is therefore reasonable to speculate that we can tolerate numerous and deep formal flaws in literary works traditionally considered great because our evaluation depends on the degree to which these works function to enrich the narrative we spin out of the unmediated vaguery of raw experience. Contemporary literature would then allow us to align such enriched inner narratives with the general values and sense of reality of the community in which we and the artifact exist, while literature of other times and places, in conjunction with knowledge from other sources, would lend significance to the particularity of those stories, would deepen our sense of our own historicity, by providing an entrée into the different stresses involved in forging other stories within the conventions, constraints and structures of those other times and places.

I believe the mode of literary analysis I have proposed makes it possible, without doing violence to the sense of significance generated by literature, to be specific about the ways in which it portrays private desire structured within and playing itself out on the world's stages.

NOTES

1. Norman Holland, *Dynamics of Literary Response* (New York, 1968).
2. Frederick Crews, "Anaesthetic Criticism," *Psychoanalysis and Literary Process* (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 18-24. A particularly rich example of his inclusiveness is his "Conrad's Uneasiness—and Ours," in *Out of My System* (New York, 1974), pp. 41-62. More recently Leon Edel in *Stuff of Sleep and Dreams* (New York, 1982) has advanced a theory of "literary psychology: the study of what literature expresses of the human being that creates it" (p. 12). Making use of authors' dreams he traces the passage of a project from the private realm of dream and phantasy to the public realm of art in order to read literature for what it reveals not of an author's symptoms, but for its capacity to reveal particular forms of the general process by which human beings struggle with life's problems. While I think his study offers interesting results, and promotes a generous and attentive stance in the reader, I believe my approach has the advantage of being systematic, and independent of extra-literary evidence, though it can be integrated with such evidence when it exists.
3. See *Poems in Person* (New York, 1973) and *Five Readers Reading* (New Haven, 1975). Though Holland does not take on the contradiction involved in a non-judgemental attitude toward a response that is still considered to be a response to something, the generous atmosphere of the collective criticism he reports brings forth rich readings. A somewhat similar practice is discussed by Richard Jones in *The Dream Poet* (Cambridge, Mass., 1979). He develops a strategy of "dream reflection," distinct from dream analysis, which involves in a random or playful way making analogues from dream configurations, from their style, to one's current concerns and to one's manner of dealing with life situations, and moving as the mind flows from past to present events. On the basis of this practice he describes a Dream Reflection Seminar in which he and his students shared their dream reflections with each other and used them, then, as means to enter into relationship with works of literature they studied in common, using the reflection on dreams and on literature to enlighten each other. He describes these seminars as "a kind of blending of group therapy, literary criticism, and creative writing; mixed with the study of psychology and literature" (p. 102). His work is based on a theory of dreaming as integrative of past affective

schemes into present cognitive structures. Gail S. Reed in "Toward a Methodology for Applying Psychoanalysis to Literature," *The Psychoanalytic Review*, LI (1982), 19-42, tries to rescue the text by arguing that the literary "surface elicits the same fantasy in its reader as organizes it" (p. 21) but does not give an account, on that premise, of different responses.

4. In "Desire and the Interpretation of Desire in *Hamlet*," *Yale French Studies*, 55/56, pp. 11-52, Lacan, though he goes outside of the text into theory, and is using the text to advance the theory, finds what is hidden not behind the text, but in ebb and flow of action and language.

5. Anton Ehrenzweig, *The Hidden Order of Art* (London, 1967). Ehrenzweig argues that he unlike Koestler in *The Act of Creation* (London, 1965) or Ernst Kris, *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art* (New York, 1952) sees surface thought in art not merely linked but "wholly immersed in the matrix of the primary process," p. 262.

6. Arthur L. Marotti, "Countertransference, the Communication Process and the Dimension of Psychoanalytic Criticism," *Critical Inquiry*, 4 (1978), 471-89. Marotti reviews the work of the Anglo-American psycho-analytic theorists which revise Freud's polarity between primary process and rational thought, seeing instead a continuum from infantile to adult structures, and relates their theoretical work to that of Holland and Ehrenzweig. More recently Alan Roland contributes to that discussion in "Imagery and the Self in Artistic Creativity and Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism," *The Psychoanalytic Review*, 68 (Fall, 1981). He argues that the artist draws images from the primary processes that unite personal feelings with larger social and cultural issues. The terminology of this discussion is correlated with Lacan's by Joseph C. Sitterson, Jr., "Psychoanalysis and Literary Theory," *University of Toronto Quarterly* (Fall, 1981), pp. 78-92, though Sitterson is not enthusiastic about the enterprise in general. My claim for the theory I here put forward is that it provides means by which the dream strategies of art can be analysed specifically, and that it overcomes the objection, repeated by Sitterson, that authors are not present to provide associations to their works.

7. These studies are anticipated by Eric Erickson's seminal work, "The Dream Specimen of Psychoanalysis," *Journal of American Psychoanalytic Association*, II (1954), 5-56, in which he argues that the manifest content reveals the dreamer's mode of accommodating the latent material of a dream to his waking life. The direction he took in thinking about dreams has been developed in work that integrates the study of dreams with research into the physiological function of REM sleep on the one hand and with cognitive psychology on the other. Louis Breger in *Clinical-Cognitive Psychology* (New Jersey, 1969) sees dreams as a form of "information processing" that integrates current situations into old frameworks, in a way consistent with his argument that REM sleep allows mammals to "differentiate and structure the central nervous system" (p. 186) and create the inner perceptual structures that allow infants to assimilate experience. See also his "Play, Fantasy and Dreams" in *From Instinct to Identity* (New Jersey, 1974), pp. 161-91. His approach draws attention to the strategies of the dreamer visible in the manifest content as well as to the past events that come up in associations. A similar theory informs the work of Richard M. Jones, *The New Psychology of Dreaming* (New York, 1970) who pays attention to the structures of dreams as indicative of the individual's habitual thought processes, of his mode of assimilating and accommodating "systems of meanings," p. 166.

8. Jones, *The New Psychology of Dreaming*, pp. 10-14.

9. Sitterson, p. 88.

10. Exclusive attention is given to the manifest content of dreams by Calvin S. Hall and Robert L. Van de Castle in *The Content Analysis of Dreams* (New York, 1966). They argue that a "dream is a manifest experience" (p. 20) and attempt to establish categories for images, relationships, settings and actions in dreams, the analysis of which reveals the concerns of the dreamer. More recently David Foulkes in *The Grammar of Dreams* (New York, 1978) proposes a method of anlayzing the "sentences" of dreams by eliminating the distinction between associations found within a series of dreams and the material produced by free association. His method, too, leads to reading dreams as a mode by which a dreamer articulates his experience, and tends to dissolve the manifest-latent dichotomy. A related literary strategy is found in Edward A. Armstrong's *Shakespeare's Imagination* (Lincoln, 1963). He elaborately studies the ways in which images in Shakespeare's plays regularly, either overtly or covertly, bring others in their wake, so that similar clusters appear regularly in similar contexts. Though he is not psychoanalytically inclined, his method has some similarity to the kind of analysis I am proposing. Mark Kanzer, in "Shakespeare's Dog Images—*Hidden Keys to Julius Caesar*," *American Imago* (1979), pp. 2-31, uses a psychoanalytic understanding when he relates the way images function in that play to the ideas and emotions associated with dogs in other plays.

11. My attention to the topography of dreams, to the relation of the dreamer to figures in his dreams, and to different emotional levels in dreams, as well as some of the ways in which dream theory relates to literature is deeply indebted to Loehrich's work. Some of his published works are *Oneirics and Psychosomatices* (McHenry, Ill., 1953), *The Secret of Ulysses* (McHenry, Ill., 1953) and, more recently, *Thought Operations with Dreams and Reconstructions of Symbolic Systems,* Vol. II of a six volume work, *Exercitium Cogitandi* (Oxford: Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1978). His theory of dreams sharply distinguishes between interpretation, which relies on a dreamer's associations to relate his dream to his waking life, present and past, and analysis, which understand from the relations within the manifest content only the presently relevant emotional configuration.

This theory clearly shares some common ground with that of Norman Holland in *Dynamics of Literary Response.* It differs from his, though, in the emphasis it throws on the protagonist's movements toward, away from, or around, what Holland would call the core phantasy. If one limits oneself to statements that arise only from the chains of association, one cannot go beyond, or dive under, the mind of the protagonist, so that some works will not reveal the centre around which the action plays. One might never be able to say which drive or desire serves as a defense for which, and often it seems that conflicting drives defend and express each other, and that protagonist is, like Lear, caught in the "To-and-fro-conflicting wind and rain," or is like the "star's tennis balls."

12. Roger Scruton, emphasizing the role of selectivity in the concept of representation, contrasts painting and photography in a way that implicitly suggests a meeting point for a mimetic and expressive theory of art. The strategy I propose is designed to explore such a meeting point. ("Photography and Representation," *Literary Inquiry* [Spring, 1981], pp. 577-603.)

13. I am using the useful distinction Barbara Herrnstein Smith in *On the Margins of Discourse* (Chicago, 1978) makes between natural and fictive discourse, but I am concerned with the space such fictivity opens for the dream levels of the mind, for "primary process" thinking to enter and permeate language and concept once it has in this way been cut loose from what she calls the "linguistic marketplace."

14. I take all my examples from Shakespeare's plays because this essay is a portion of a larger work that illustrates this theory through an extended study of the relation between Shakespeare's portrayal of love and his portrayal of family relationships through his plays. That is also why I opt for the masculine pronoun, for it seems inappropriate to use "she" when I have Shakespeare, and for the most part, male protagonists in mind.

15. Roy Schafer in "Narration in the Psychoanalytic Dialogue" (*Critical Inquiry* [Autumn, 1980], pp. 29-53), sees the therapeutic process as reconstructing the patient's narration of his story through a narrative structure of dialogue. It would cohere with his concept to see dreams as revelatory of the dreamer's strategy of self-narration (Freud in theory discounted the sequence, or narrative line, of dreams though he sometimes talked of the sequence in particular dreams as providing grammatical connections).

16. Norman Holland in 'Hermia's Dream," *(Representing Shakespeare,* ed. Schwartz and Kahn [Baltimore, 1980], pp. 1-20, uses a similar strategy when he interprets Hermia's dream from associations he finds in other parts of the play, treating them the way one would free associations, and Jim Swan in "Giving New Depth to the Surface" (*Psychoanalytic Review* 62 [1975]), 1-27, in taking issue with Norman Holland's analysis of the witch joke that begins *Dynamics of Literary Response,* argues that taking account of the manifest aspects of the joke — the world of business and stock market—shows the joke transforming fears of economic aggression into those of sexual phantasy, rather than the other way around.

17. Hamlet's reflections on the stage are both a device by which he distances himself from his dilemma, and by which he reshapes, in stages, the initiating version of the murder. The self-reflexivity of stage image in a stage play expresses the character's self-reflection. Hamlet, Shakespeare's most self-reflexive character, is suitably in his most self-reflexive play.

18. See below for discussion of the choice of who should be regarded as the dreaming protagonist.

19. I have concentrated only on individual plays. However, if one sees works by a single author as a sequence of dreams, one can watch attributes that define several characters coalesce into one figure, or separate from one into several. An important dimension of my study of Shakespeare's plays involves tracing such patterns, as well as the way similar figures take different familial roles, and the way love relationships move from foreground to background and vary their emotional intensity as women become daughters, wives become mothers or witches. As naturalistic portrayal emerges from and gives way to symbolic abstraction, and as landscapes and images change their colour and recombine, one can see

in these kaleidoscopic configurations the dream dimension behind even the most realisti-
cally portrayed figures and situations.

20. This discussion coheres with the thinking involved in ego psychology, and in the work done
on object relations and the concept of the self. See particularly D. W. Winnicott, *Playing
and Reality* (New York, 1971). Winnicott's concept of a transitional or play space between
self and others that allows a child to preserve autonomy while defining him or her self in
reference to others, and Lacan's concept of the mirror stage during which the child forms a
concept of self in terms of the images of the other both call attention to the depth at which
the concept of selfhood is integrally intertwined with that of other persons.